

Results of the Image Preference Survey Land Development Regulations and Design Guidelines

In late 2006, Farr & Assoc., of Chicago, was hired by the City to rewrite our land development regulations, such as zoning, subdivision, tree protection, and design regulations. This is an implementation step following the 2006 update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Update was a public process which answered questions about the location and type of development in Lakeland's future. Farr & Assoc. will now refine those decisions into development standards which impact site design, quality, character, aesthetics, the provision of infrastructure, and natural resources.

On May 7, 2007, Farr & Assoc., of Chicago visited the City, and among other activities, held the second public meeting for this project. This visit included as part of a public meeting the presentation of an Image Preference Survey (IPS), where 182 images representing different styles of development were rated on a +5 to -5 scale. For instance, a rating of -5 meant that this development is absolutely inappropriate, and +5 meant that this image is exactly appropriate, in given parts of the community.

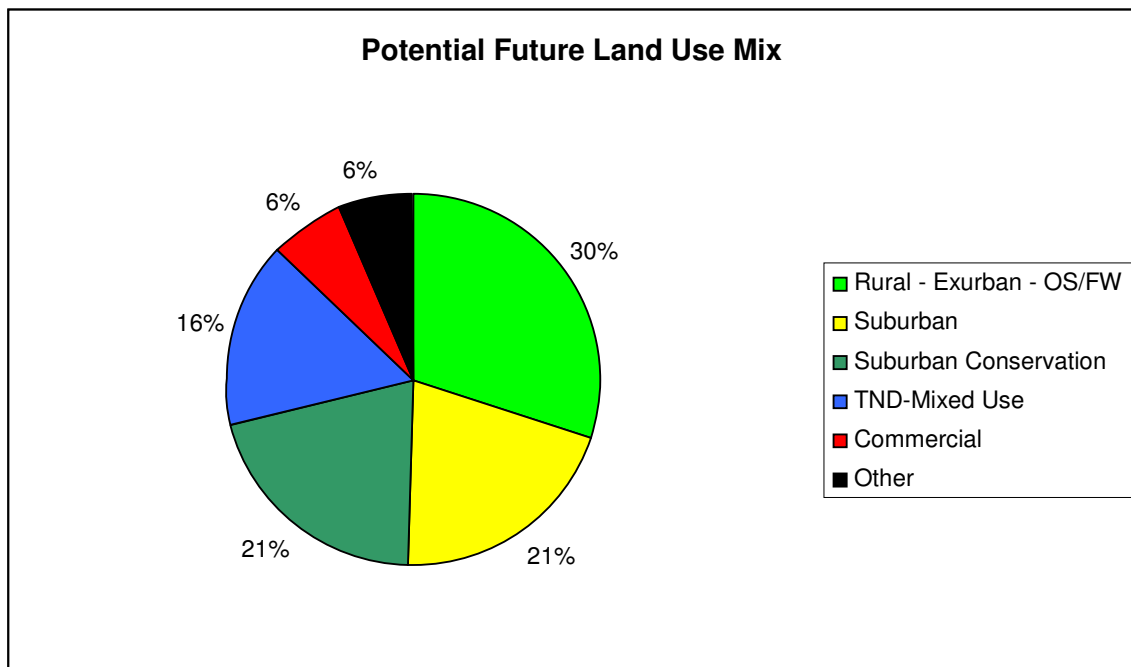
Photographs were shown of various development types, including subdivisions, strip malls, big box retail, small scale commercial nodes, townhomes, apartment buildings, etc. Note that the purpose of the IPS is not necessarily to illustrate what will occur in Lakeland, but rather to show many different possibilities of what could occur, given varying zoning regulations. In some instances, what is shown in the IPS is already prohibited by Lakeland's current zoning code, or is recommended to be prohibited by the Comprehensive Plan (such as big box development along the commercial corridors). Often, these images are used to confirm with the community that those development types are still inappropriate, and for appropriate development, how it should look and be scaled.

These same images were also ranked by the Advisory Committee, a group of about 10, citizens, staff, and interested parties, formed to review proposals as they come forward. This Committee does not make decisions, but recommends actions to Farr & Assoc, the Planning Commission, and Board of Commissioners during the project.

The results of the IPS were tallied and published on the City website in late May (See Planning Department page on the website.). These results were similar for surveys from the public at large and the Advisory Committee, and indicate preferences for development styles that are sensitively scaled, pedestrian friendly, architecturally compatible, and with protected natural or landscaped open spaces, whether in a Town Center, Mixed Use, Commercial, or Suburban area. Exurban and Rural areas are a future discussion item not covered in this particular survey. In the chart at the bottom of this article, Rural & Exurban development would typically be 2-5 acre residential lots, and adjacent floodway and open space areas would help to maintain some of the existing character of those areas.

At this time, City staff is corresponding with Farr & Assoc. to feed additional information to them for the development of preliminary proposals, based on the feedback from the prior public meetings, prior Advisory Committee meetings, staff input, and by having them monitor selected development proposals being brought forward to the Planning Commission. Staff is also doing some background preparation with the Advisory Committee, between the visits by Farr & Assoc. Farr & Assoc, is expected to conduct another public meeting this Fall, to be announced. Further meetings will occur in 2008 before anything can be adopted. The ultimate end of the project, when adoption of new regulations could occur, will likely be Summer, 2008.

Below is a land use chart, based on preliminary assumptions derived from the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This Plan is also under Planning, on the City Website. Definitions of some of the classifications in this chart are on the Land Use Plan. This chart is for illustration only, and analysis from the City GIS system will be developed for a more accurate depiction. Although the land use mix was not a subject of the meetings conducted to date by Farr & Assoc., in the future, Farr & Assoc. will be analyzing the distribution of uses within some of these classifications, for the purpose of creating recommended new regulations.



Note: This chart is generalized, combining some of the classifications in the Comprehensive Plan